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# Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI) SUCCESS STORY

## Community Overcomes Tragedy to Finish Road



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The Bahrabad-Markazi Road where CCI rehabilitated 750m of road, and the community completed an additional 221m.

***“By rehabilitating the road my kids can easily go to school and play ground, as well as have access to near clinics.”***

– Shafiullah

*Bahrabad resident*

***“Prior to the road rehabilitation, my family suffered a lot from respiratory sicknesses because of the stagnant water by the road, but now these illnesses have been greatly reduced”.***

– Nasser

*Bahrabad resident*

**February 2014** - The limited influence of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) is largely attributed to corruption, incapacity and failure to fulfil its obligations. In Sarkani District, the poor condition of the roads is a long running grievance, obstructing access to markets, public services and community interaction. Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI) is working to improve the Sarkani District Governor's (DG) perception by residents of Bahrabad, Shedalam, Ghundai Kalau, Qalalwona and Koz Kaliai villages, through the Bahrabad-Markazi road rehabilitation project.

CCI worked with the DG and local leaders to form a project shura, a monitoring group representing community and government sentiments. The cooperative approach resulted in a 750m section of road completed on time. However, a more significant outcome emerged when the community as a whole was tested, after the death of a popular government official.

The respected Deputy Head of Sarkani District Development Assembly, Mr. Shah Mahmood, played a pivotal role in lobbying CCI to support this and other projects. His charismatic leadership drew support from the 630 families across the community. Mahmood regularly received threats from Anti-Government Elements (AGEs), however always vowed: “My destiny is to serve my people, and if I get killed in this way I will be very fortunate.” On 22 November 2013, he died when his car drove over an IED planted by AGEs. His death prompted huge outpouring of community grief and it was anticipated the AGEs would triumph in halting the project. The following month AGEs also killed Shah Mahmood's nephew, Mr. Imran, a member of the Afghan Local Police (ALP).

Outraged residents proclaimed to their enemies that “Everyone in this area is now Shah Mahmood,” and promised that his noble mission would be fulfilled. They stated, “If AGEs want to kill another Shah Mahmood, they have to kill all the Bahrabad residents”. The tragedy further motivated the project shura and DG to collaboratively work to complete another 221m of the Gahrabad-Markazi road, without direct CCI involvement. Overall, almost one kilometer of road and side drainage was rehabilitated, continuing CCI efforts to increase the number of cooperative opportunities for relationship building between communities and their governments.